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NOAA Gulf of Mexico News

NOAA Continues to Predict Above-Normal Hurricane Season

With the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season upon us, experts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are reiterating their prediction for an above-normal number of storms. NOAA scientists warn this year's relatively quiet start is not an indication of what the remainder of the season has in store.

"This year's three named storms may pale in comparison to the record nine storms that formed through early August 2005, but conditions will be favorable for above-normal activity for the rest of this season — so we are not off the hook by any means," said Vice Admiral [Conrad C. Lautenbacher](#), Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

For the entire 2006 season, which ends November 30, NOAA is projecting a total of 12 to 15 named storms of which seven to nine will intensify to hurricanes, including three or four becoming major hurricanes — rated at Category 3 or higher. This forecast is slightly lower than the outlook issued in May, but remains above the seasonal average of 11 named storms, six hurricanes and two major hurricanes.

According to Gerry Bell, Ph.D., NOAA's lead seasonal hurricane forecaster, the major climate factors expected to influence this year's activity are the ongoing multi-decadal signal, which produces wind and atmospheric pressure patterns favorable for hurricane formation, along with ongoing warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures. NOAA attributes these same factors to the current active Atlantic hurricane era that began in 1995. Bell noted that conditions were ripe last year for early season storm development. "La Niña-like convection in the central equatorial Pacific during June and July of 2005 contributed to the development of numerous early-season storms," he said. "Conditions this year reflect a more typical active season, with peak activity expected during August-October."

NOAA's seasonal outlook, however, does not specify where and when tropical storms and hurricanes could strike. "Science has not evolved enough to accurately predict on seasonal timescales when and where these storms will likely make landfall," said Bell. "Exactly when and where landfall occurs is strongly controlled by the weather patterns in place as the storms approach land. These weather patterns generally cannot be predicted more than several days in advance."

"As we approach the peak of the hurricane season, our message remains the same, be informed and be prepared," said Max Mayfield, director of NOAA's National Hurricane Center. "Preventing the loss of life and minimizing property damage from hurricanes are responsibilities shared by all. Remember, one hurricane hitting your neighborhood is enough to make it a bad season."

On the Web:

NOAA Watch: <http://www.noaawatch.gov>

Climate Prediction Center: <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov>

National Hurricane Center: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

NOAA Seeks Comment on Marine Mammal Incidental Harassment Request

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is seeking comment on a proposal to issue annual incidental harassment permits to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida for air-to-surface weapons testing. The permit is valid for a period of five years and will expire in 2011. The [U.S. Air Force](#) is requesting the permit while conducting precision strike weapons tests in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Florida. Incidental harassment of dolphins and small whales may occur as the result of air-to-surface impacts. Weapons testing would occur two to four times per year and launched from aircraft to targets located approximately 15 to 24 nautical miles offshore of the [Eglin](#) base. Targets are floating platforms and barges, and detonations could potentially affect marine mammals.

Under the proposal, no detonations will occur if marine mammals or sea turtles are detected within a predetermined safety zone designed to protect marine species from hearing impairment, injury or mortality. NOAA Fisheries Service has preliminarily determined that these detonations will not result in more than incidental harassment of marine mammals and would have no more than a negligible impact on these stocks.

An authorization under the Marine Mammal Protection Act is warranted to protect marine life in the vicinity of the exercise. The implementation of extensive mitigation and monitoring measures, including vessel and aerial marine mammal surveys prior to the firing exercises, will assist in limiting impacts to bottlenose dolphins, spotted dolphins, and dwarf and pygmy sperm whales that may be in the vicinity of the detonations to behavioral harassment.

The NOAA Fisheries Service will accept comments on the application and proposed authorization through Sept. 4, 2006. Please address comments to Michael Payne, Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NOAA Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. A copy of the application and [Federal Register](#) notice can be obtained by contacting the same office or online at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#iha>

Boundary Making Handbook Now Available

A new 66-page handbook on boundary making provides a brief, useful “best practices” guide for writing boundary descriptions within a geographic information system framework for federal, state, or local marine managed areas. The handbook was a two-year development effort created by boundary experts across federal and state government under the auspices of the Federal Geographic Data Committee’s marine boundary working group. NOAA offices that contributed include the Coastal Services Center, Office of Coast Survey, Office of the General Counsel, National Marine Sanctuary Program, and National Marine Protected Areas Center. For more information or to receive a copy, contact [Meredith Westington](#) or [Cindy Fowler](#).

Input Sought on Land Use Planning Tools

The [Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology](#) (CICEET) will solicit proposals this fall for projects aimed at developing and/or broadening the application of land use planning tools for improved coastal environmental health. To insure that this new funding opportunity reflects the primary technology needs of the land use planning community, CICEET is looking for input from the

field. Professionals or volunteers engaged in land use planning, working in a related field, are being asked to take a short survey to evaluate the research focus areas included in this funding opportunity. Please forward this invitation to anyone who may be interested in participating. Take the survey. For more information, contact [Dwight Trueblood](#).

Office of Coast Survey Aids in New Reef Construction off the Coast of Louisiana

On August 5, the Office of Coast Survey attended a ribbon cutting ceremony to begin construction on a new artificial reef at Redfish Point in Vermillion Bay. The Vermilion Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association led this effort in collaboration with NOAA, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and a grant in part from Shell Oil. Coast Survey Regional Navigation Managers provided assistance in site selection, determination of reef type, and documentation for the project charting it as a "fish haven" on NOAA charts. The addition of 3,500 tons of crushed limestone to the project area is expected to improve marine habitat and biodiversity in the bay and revive a once thriving reef ruined by Hurricane Rita. For more information, contact [Tim Osborn](#).

New Orleans "Saving Our Coasts" Web Site Goes Live

A new Web site hosted by New Orleans TV station Fox 8 provides environmental information aimed at helping the region repair and restore coastal wetlands and barrier islands. Many NOAA products and services are featured on the site, which is located at <http://wvue.iewatershed.com>. The NOAA Coastal Services Center partnered with StormCenter Communications Inc. in this effort. For more information, contact, [Donna McCaskill](#).

In the Gulf States

2006 Alabama Coastal BirdFest

The 2006 Alabama Coastal BirdFest, October 19-22, will provide insight into how birds and other wildlife deal with hurricanes and give birders a new way to track their favorite birds. At the opening night reception on Thursday, October 19, a panel of three distinguished ornithologists will discuss "Hurricanes and Habitat: How Wildlife Survives." Speakers include Dr. John Dindo, assistant director and a senior marine scientist at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Roger Clay, nongame wildlife biologist, ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, and Eric Soehren, terrestrial zoologist, ADCNR Natural Heritage Section, State Lands Division.

Dr. Dindo will speak about the nesting patterns of herons, egrets, and ibises on Cat Island, a tiny but important island in the Mississippi Sound that is now mostly under water; Roger Clay will discuss the hurricane impact on Mobile Bay's Gaillard Island, Alabama's most important site for colonial nesting shore birds, with over 5,000 brown pelican nests; and Eric Soehren will discuss the challenges of bird migration after hurricanes. The opening night reception is planned for the Gulf Coast Exploreum in Mobile.

On Friday night, as part of the BBQ & Seafood Social at the Nix Center in Fairhope, Dr. Sidney Gauthreaux, Centennial Professor of Biological Sciences at South Carolina's Clemson University, will present a program on using Doppler radar to identify and track migratory birds. Although the topic sounds complicated, Dr. Gauthreaux said interested bird watchers could learn the process Friday night and put to use Saturday morning. "There are several good Internet sites where you can get real-time information from Doppler radar. I believe that after hearing my presentation, people will have the skills to monitor bird migration the same as I do.

There is a significant relationship between what you see on the radar one night and what you see in the woods the next morning." A native of New Orleans and graduate of LSU, Dr. Gauthreaux has studied using weather radar to track migrating birds since the 1970s. In 1990, he established the Clemson University Radar Ornithology Laboratory (CUROL). In 1995, with support from the Department of Defense, CUROL began archiving bird movements using a national network of Doppler radar sites. This database has aided in the development of national and regional maps of bird migration and maps of important migration stopover areas.

Birdfest features over 20 guided tours along the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, two evening events, and a free daylong Bird and Conservation Expo at Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus with speakers, films, exhibits, workshops, kids' activities and more.

Advance registration is required for the tours and evening events. For more information, call 251-929-0922 or visit www.alabamacoastalbirdfest.com.

Charlotte Harbor NEP Publishes Watershed Summit Proceedings in a Special Issue of Florida Scientist

A special issue of the Florida Scientist dedicated to the Charlotte Harbor region is now published and available as PDF files on the Program website www.CHNEP.org. The Florida Scientist is a publication of the Florida Academy of Sciences. This special issue includes 13 articles written by local researchers, resource managers and educators and utilized the aid of more than 30 scientists for the peer review process. Catherine Corbett with Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, Peter Doering with South Florida Water Management District and Ernest Estevez with Mote Marine Laboratory served as guest editors. Dean Martin and Barbara Martin, lead editors of the Florida Scientist, provided invaluable guidance.

The Charlotte Harbor NEP hosts triennial conferences for area scientists, resource managers, planners, industry staff and citizens to learn more about current research and restoration efforts as well as critical environmental issues affecting the Charlotte Harbor watershed. Charlotte Harbor Watershed Summits are opportunities for participants to review progress since the preceding summit. Due to a request by the Charlotte Harbor technical community to have the proceedings of the 2005 Watershed Summit published in a scientific, peer-reviewed journal, the Florida Academy of Sciences published a special issue of the Florida Scientist for these proceedings. CHNEP financially supported this publication.

The 2005 conference was held in February in Punta Gorda with more than 100 participants for the four-day event. The central theme of the conference was Lessons Learned in Transferring Science to Watershed Management. This theme was used for the Florida Scientist special issue. The research and management efforts included within this issue pertain specifically to Charlotte Harbor, Florida, but are

designed to be of interest to researchers and others outside the region. Articles relate to transferring science to watershed management or emerging methods of research, monitoring and restoration.

Subjects include water quality and seagrass issues, research on detecting ecoestrogens in the Myakka River, results from five years of Frog Watch, environmental education issues in local schools, research on spotted seatrout, a model simulating Hurricane Charley storm surge and a blue crab habitat suitability model. The articles address several key components important to the Florida Scientist and its readers, such as research that directly influences watershed management, applicability to other coastal systems, helps readers better understand estuarine ecosystems or management issues in general and is of interest to scientists or resource managers outside Charlotte Harbor.

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program greatly appreciates the diligent efforts of the guest editors, contributors and peer reviewers of this special issue as well as the Florida Academy of Science. It is through hard work and dedication of these individuals that this special issue is possible. The next Charlotte Harbor Watershed Summit will be held during the winter of 2008.

Florida Launches “Coaches Campaign” for Hurricane Preparedness

~Icon Coaches Tout Importance of Having a Plan~

MIAMI- The Department of Community Affairs and the State Emergency Response Team introduced a public service campaign at Dolphin Stadium featuring some of Florida’s best known head coaches to urge citizens to prepare for Hurricane Season. “I thank the Miami Dolphins, Miami Heat, Florida State University and the University of Florida, Coaches Saban, Riley, Bowden and Donovan for helping us educate Floridians on the critical need for hurricane preparedness,” said Governor Jeb Bush. “Prepared residents are better equipped to provide for the safety of their families, reduce damage to their homes and recover more quickly from a disaster,” added Governor Bush.

The campaign, featuring spots with Florida’s top sports coaches, was created as a follow-up to the State’s hard-hitting “Get a Plan” campaign to help communicate the importance of having a sound plan throughout hurricane season. “The Miami Dolphins are proud to support the State in its effort to deliver a message that will help protect families and save lives,” stated Dolphin Team President and Chief Operating Officer Bryan Wiedmeier. “The last two hurricane seasons have reminded all of us that we’re all Floridians first and need to take care of each other,” added Wiedmeier.

The star-studded cast of Florida coaches will appear in public service spots that will be broadcast on a regional basis across the State. The message in the spots underscore that, as fellow Floridians, the coaches are concerned about hurricane season and take pride in their responsibility to prepare before a storm is in the forecast. “These coaches are highly respected, household names in their local communities,” said Thaddeus Cohen, Secretary for the Department of Community Affairs. “As these coaches prepare for their own seasons, they have taken the time to urge Floridians to prepare for the season that affects us all, hurricane season,” added Cohen.

All three spots were debuted during a press conference at Dolphin Stadium, one hour before the Dolphins kicked off their preseason against the Jacksonville Jaguars. The spot featuring Miami Dolphins Head Coach Nick Saban, and his wife and daughter, was later broadcast on the stadium’s Hi-Definition screens during halftime. “In order to create a culture of preparedness, we need a couple of different ways to keep a serious message in the public consciousness throughout the year,” said Craig Fugate, Director of the State Emergency Response Team. “The one-two punch of the hard hitting ‘Get a Plan’ campaign,

launched at the start of the hurricane season, combined with the Coaches Campaign, will help us accomplish this objective,” added Director Fugate.

Establishing a "Culture of Preparedness" for hurricanes has been a top priority for Governor Bush. These new efforts will significantly enhance Florida's ability to prepare for hurricanes, respond quickly in the aftermath of a storm, recover from the damage and impacts to the economy and mitigate future threats to public safety and infrastructure.

“Kicking off the campaign at Dolphins Stadium during an inter-city game will help us get the message out to as many Floridians as possible,” says Scott Morris, FEMA's Director of Florida's Long-Term Recovery. “While fans are enjoying the strategies of their favorite team they should also be thinking about the X's and O's of hurricane preparedness. Just like all these great coaches, each of us needs a good game plan.”

FL Department of Community Affairs Helping Local Governments Become Financially Feasible

~Secretary Thaddeus Cohen announces the latest version of the Fiscal Impact Analysis Model (FIAM)~

JACKSONVILLE- Department of Community Affairs Secretary Thaddeus Cohen was on hand today at the Florida League of Cities annual conference to announce the latest tool to help local governments ensure that their comprehensive plans are financially responsible. The Fiscal Impact Analysis Model (FIAM) is one professionally accepted method that will assist local governments in determining the true costs associated with land use and development plans.

“We chose to unveil the new FIAM model at the League of Cities event because the local government leaders that attend this event will benefit most from using the model,” stated Secretary Thaddeus Cohen. “The Department is striving to make various tools available to aid local governments in implementing the new provisions of the Growth Management Laws passed in 2005,” added Cohen.

The Fiscal Impact Analysis Model (FIAM) is a user-friendly, computer-based tool used to measure the financial implications of alternative land-use scenarios. The model can be used to help validate the financial capacity of a local government to implement its comprehensive plan. The Department is offering the model as a tool to local governments free of charge and the Regional Planning Councils are offering training on how to properly apply the model.

“FIAM is one element in a technology initiative by DCA to provide the latest planning tools to Florida's local governments,” stated Director of the Division of Community Planning Valerie Hubbard. “We are excited that the Department is able to provide these tools and aid local governments in the development of sound growth plans,” added Hubbard. For more information regarding the Department of Community Affairs, please visit www.dca.state.fl.us.

Device Could Warn of Red Tide Bloom

By GINNY LAROE, virginia.laroe@heraldtribune.com

Article published Aug 12, 2006

VENICE -- A device tested off the coast of Venice this week could bring researchers a step closer to understanding what causes red tide. The device, called an autonomous microbial genosensor, uses genetic

evidence to detect trace amounts of the toxic bloom, before dead fish wash ashore and beachgoers flee the waters after the stench sets in, said David Fries, who leads the Eco-Systems Technology Group at University of South Florida's Center for Ocean Technology. The genosensor also tracks the blooms throughout their growth phase, which reveal what conditions contribute to the outbreaks, said Fries, who helped develop the device.

Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus feed algae. Fertilizers, sewage outflows and other pollutants have increased the amount of nutrients in waterways. USF researchers seized the opportunity to test the \$10,000 sensor in waters off Venice Beach after reports indicated red tide had moved into the area. Monday, they sailed nearly a mile off Sharky's Pier to deploy the genosensor. They used tried-and-true lab tests to compare water samples collected throughout the week to the genosensor's results.

Friday, researchers had a minor setback when they opened the genosensor, a 4-foot-long black cylinder, and discovered a mechanical malfunction that Fries attributes to user error. "There was too much pressure to get this thing in (the water) at a certain time," he said about preparing for the deployment on a dock in front of media crews. "We goofed a bit." But Fries said other test runs show the mechanism works. And one day he'd like to see a series of genosensors -- near populated beaches -- track red tide.

Several other research groups are testing gene-sensing prototypes in an effort to find ways to learn more about red tide, said Cindy Heil, a senior research scientist at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Institute. Currently, the only FDA-approved way to monitor red tide, as it relates to the contamination of shellfish, is by counting cells under microscopes.

While some scientists maintain that red tide is naturally occurring, Fries is among researchers who believe human behavior is probably making it worse. "The more we build around the water -- it's got to have an effect," Fries said. "My sense is at the end of the day, human activity will contribute to it, but there may be some natural variants that contribute to it."

But even if this technique proves successful, scientists urge caution in expecting solutions to red tide, even if certain events such as increased roof or road runoff are implicated in blooms. "It's an interesting problem -- as scientists, we like to work on this," said Larry Brand of the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science at the University of Miami. "But even if we understand it, that doesn't mean we can somehow make red tide go away."

The current outbreak of red tide is heading north toward the Tampa Bay area. The last massive red tide outbreak started in winter 2004 and lasted through fall 2005. It spread from south of Naples up to Tampa Bay, killing sea life and closing beaches.

New Documentary about Louisiana

A new television documentary called *Washing Away: Losing Louisiana* will air in September. Christina Melton, an award winning Louisiana Public Broadcasting producer has completed a powerful documentary that will air within Louisiana on public broadcasting stations on the one-year anniversary of Katrina on August 29, 2006 at 8:00 p.m. It will air again in Louisiana on September 3, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. *Washing Away* will air nationally on September 7, 2006 at 8:00 p.m. CST (9:00 p.m. EST).

Washing Away: Losing Louisiana is the story of Louisiana's disappearing coastline and how this unfolding crisis affects all of America. The documentary is told through the eyes of people affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita and is narrated by academy award winner, Susan Sarandon.

You can see a preview of *Washing Away* online at <http://www.lpb.org/programs/washingaway/>.

EPA Posts Summary of Final Sediment Sample Results Taken in Hurricane Katrina Response

(Washington, D.C. - August 17, 2006) On August 17, 2006, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the final summary of sediment sampling conducted in response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In total, EPA and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality collected approximately 1,800 sediment and sediment/soil samples since the hurricane flooded New Orleans and the surrounding parishes. Most of these samples were analyzed for over 200 metals and organic chemicals. The results indicate that, in general, the sediments left behind by the flooding from the hurricanes are not expected to cause adverse health impacts to individuals returning to New Orleans. A few localized areas were re-assessed due to elevated levels of arsenic, lead, benzo(a)pyrene, and diesel and oil range organic petroleum chemicals. These sampling results served as the basis for a series of recommendations and advisories provided by local government. The final summary provides an extensive picture of the conditions in the flood impacted areas.

[*Summary Results of Sediment Sampling Conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency in Response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita*](#)

[All test results](#)

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Water-sewer Money Approved for Mississippi

Feds promise millions more

By GEOFF PENDER glpender@sunherald.com,

<http://www.sunherald.com/mld/sunherald/news/15292347.htm>

GULFPORT - Federal officials on Wednesday approved \$33 million - the first chunk of what is expected to be hundreds of millions - to expand water and sewer service in the six South Mississippi counties in expectation of a population move to inland, rural areas after Katrina. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson approved \$33 million for a Mississippi program to bring centralized water and sewer services to Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, George, Pearl River and Stone counties. Mississippi will earmark \$6.5 million of this to develop a master plan and \$25 million to meet critical needs. The state plans to spend another \$500 million in federal funds implementing the water and sewerage master plan. This is in addition to approximately \$400 million Congress approved to rebuild destroyed water and sewer systems on the Coast.

Gov. Haley Barbour last year lobbied Congress successfully for more water and sewerage funding, part of a \$5 billion federal community development Katrina relief package. In previous disasters, the federal government would pay only to help rebuild infrastructure destroyed, not expand it into new areas. But Barbour argued that Katrina would cause people to move inland from the Coast's population centers to areas without water and sewerage. This, he said, would worsen problems with septic tank pollution and too many individual water wells, as county governments could not afford to build systems to meet housing demand.

But Congress and HUD placed a caveat on the spending. It would be allowed only if Mississippi took a regional approach to water and sewerage. Barbour, with the backing of state Sen. Tommy Moffatt, R-Gautier, and others pushed legislation this year to create a regional authority with broad control over water and sewerage development in South Mississippi. But county supervisors - and their powerful state lobby - opposed this. In the end, the legislation that passed created a regional board, but still left true control to local governments. The bill also left an "opt-out" clause for any county that votes against joining, but then it won't receive the money.

The bill did create six countywide water and sewer districts for the counties. Barbour recently said: "The federal government won't give us the money if we're just running around willy-nilly and not taking a regional approach. We got to checking and realized that no county here had a countywide water and sewer district. There were more than 100 separate authorities, but no county had an authority that had any authority over the entire county."

On Wednesday, Barbour said, "This is an enormous undertaking, but despite the complexity, it must be done quickly, effectively and correctly. We will not get another chance to make these types of improvements that will dramatically improve quality of life, protect infrastructure from future storms and spur economic development opportunities for decades to come."

Fishing Industry Funds Coming to Mississippi

Up to \$38M in next five years

By MIKE KELLER, mkeller@sunherald.com

<http://www.sunherald.com/mld/sunherald/business/15283802.htm>

Department of Marine Resources officials said at Tuesday's monthly meeting that money to restore the coastal and marine environment and disaster assistance to area fishermen may be on the way. Also, Trinity Yachts and the Isle of Capri Casino had their coastline-alteration permits approved and a more-detailed sketch of Katrina's damage to the commercial fishing fleet was revealed.

- William "Corky" Perret, director of the office of marine fisheries for DMR, said he expects Mississippi would be getting \$38 million over the next five years from federal emergency money to help rebuild marine resources. "Our oyster reefs have been decimated," Perret told the commission. "We are going to spend a lot of money fixing them."

- DMR received \$47,000 from a disaster-relief fund created by Virginia-based Fish For The Future Foundation, a nonprofit group that advocates for marine fisheries and the seafood industry. DMR will distribute the money in \$1,000 checks to area fishermen.

- Scott Gordon, director of DMR's shellfish bureau, said the department would be planting more limestone substrate for oyster beds off the Coast at the end of August or in September. He also said 7,500 sacks of oysters had been transplanted onto reefs to seed new oyster growth, and that there would be no oyster season.

- A recent survey of commercial and recreational fishing industries' damages from Hurricane Katrina by Mississippi State professor of economics Dr. Benedict Posadas revealed how deeply that storm hurt fishermen and those whose livelihoods rely upon fish and shellfish.

Half of Mississippi's commercial fishing fleet, more than 500 boats, participated in the survey. Those boats took \$35 million in damage. As of February, only five percent of the total insurance payments had

been received. Seafood processors sustained \$78 million in damages and had received 14 percent of their total insurance. Marinas sustained \$41 million in damages and had received nine percent of their total insurance. Posadas projected \$159 million in damages to the recreational fishing industry and boats and received 22 percent of total insurance payouts. The three coastal counties held more than 57,000 registered boats in 2005.

- Gulfport's Trinity Yachts was allowed to dredge 7,500 cubic yards of material from the shore of its Industrial Seaway plant to build a launch system for its line of luxury megayachts.

Biloxi's Isle of Capri Casino was allowed to change a previous permit and will proceed with plans to fill almost two acres of public wetlands to build a land-based casino.

13th Annual Border Energy Forum to be Held in Tampico, Tamaulipas

Meeting set for October 19-20

AUSTIN — Government and private sector leaders from the U.S.-Mexico border region will gather in Tampico, Tamaulipas for the 13th annual Border Energy Forum October 19-20. This year's forum — always held in a border state — will focus on energy and water development in the Southwest United States and Northern Mexico. Other key issues on this year's agenda include the future of energy policy; water and energy efficiency; border energy infrastructure; financing energy projects; energy production and the environment; and sustainable energy.

The forum will begin with an opening reception on the evening of October 18 hosted by the Houston-Tampico Sister City Association. A special tour of the Industrial Port of Altamira will be provided at the conclusion of the forum. The Border Energy Forum brings together leaders from industry, government, educational institutions and environmental organizations to develop cutting edge strategies well grounded in economic reality. It has gained a strong reputation as a neutral ground to discuss energy-related challenges common to both sides of the border.

The first forum in 1993 gathered 50 knowledgeable decision makers each from the United States and Mexico to exchange information about the best ways to produce and consume energy in Northern Mexico and the Southwest United States. The forum has always encouraged energy decisions and policies that take into account the twin goals of economic development and environmental protection.

With a combined population of more than 70 million and growing, the U.S. and Mexican border states share many problems, as well as opportunities. Energy has emerged as a mutually recognized theme critically needed to drive future growth.

U.S. partner agencies for this year's forum include the Texas General Land Office, the North American Development Bank, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the California Energy Commission, the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department and the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Mexican partners include el Gobierno del Estado de Tamaulipas, la Secretaría de Energía, la Comisión Reguladora de Energía, la Comisión de Energía de Coahuila, el Departamento de Electrificación y Ahorro de Energía de Chihuahua, la Comisión de Energía de Nuevo León, el Fideicomiso para el Ahorro de Energía Eléctrica, y la Comisión Nacional para el Ahorro de Energía.

WHO: Leaders and experts from industry, government, educational institutions and environmental organizations

WHAT: 13th Annual Border Energy Forum

WHEN: Thursday, October 19 – Friday, October 20, 2006

WHERE: The Camino Real Tampico Hotel. To learn more about the forum or to register, please visit www.glo.state.tx.us/energy/border or contact Soll Sussman at the Texas General Land Office at 512-463-5039 or Soll.Sussman@GLO.STATE.TX.US.

Other News

Do These Oysters Need Salt? Landings and Salinity in the Gulf of Mexico

More than half of the U.S. oyster harvest comes from the Gulf of Mexico, so it makes sense that steps should be considered to protect or enhance this valuable fishery and to evaluate the potential impacts of management actions on oyster yields carefully. Because oyster yields are highest at intermediate salinities (in the middle of their range of 10 – 30 ppt), managers occasionally consider projects to improve Gulf oyster landings by reducing saltwater intrusion, thereby decreasing salinities to this optimal range. These plans would theoretically work if the oysters in question live at the high end of their salinity range, but if they're at the low end of the range more freshwater would only decrease yields. An analysis of more than 50 years of oyster landings and freshwater discharge data in five Gulf states revealed that oyster landings were at their lowest when nearby river discharges increased, and conversely, landings went up when discharge was down.

A proposed \$99 million project in Louisiana aims to improve Gulf oyster landings by building a river diversion near New Orleans which would open a new or expanded Bonnet Carré Spillway, diverting Mississippi River water into Lake Pontchartrain and Mississippi Sound. Historical data on spillway diversions revealed that in 25 of the 28 times the spillway has been opened, oyster landings in the state of Mississippi were lower than in the other four states included in this study. Taken as a whole, these results suggest that Gulf oyster yields will decline, rather than be enhanced, if freshwater flow increases. The author concludes that the Bonnet Carré Spillway project cannot be justified, at least on the basis of improving oyster yields.

Source: Turner, R. E. 2006. Will lowering estuarine salinity increase Gulf of Mexico oyster landings? *Estuaries and Coasts* 29(3): 345-352. ([View Abstract](#))

Red Snapper Get Temporary Reprieve

Source: timespicayune.com, Date of Story: August 15, 2006. Summary by: Terra Bowling

Cheap imported shrimp, high fuel prices, and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have contributed to a decrease in the number of shrimpers in the Gulf of Mexico. A new report suggests that this has helped give the struggling red snapper population a chance to recover. The snapper are affected by shrimpers, because they often get trapped in trawlers' nets. The Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council meets in Baton Rouge this week to develop a recovery plan for the fish. Some of the measures being considered include stricter regulation of the shrimp industry, which could mean shorter shrimping seasons and lower

quotas. Opponents of those measures argue that the reduction in the number of shrimpers has made the industry's threat to the red snapper moot. Others fear that putting pressure on recreational and commercial red snapper fishers, instead of shrimpers, could create problems with other species.

Draft Economic Analysis of Conservation Action to Protect Alabama Beach Mouse Released

August 9, 2006. Contacts: Mike Groutt, (251) 441-6630 Tom MacKenzie, (404) 679-7107

The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) released a draft analysis estimating costs related to the conservation of the endangered [Alabama beach mouse](#) and its proposed critical habitat at between \$18.3 and \$51.8 million over the next 20 years. In February 2006, the Service proposed to revise and expand an existing critical habitat designation in order to designate a total of 1,326 acres of critical habitat for the species, which is protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In releasing the draft economic analysis, the Service is also reopening the public comment period for the proposed critical habitat designation.

Critical habitat is a term in the ESA. It identifies geographic areas that contain features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and may require special management considerations or protection. The designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, wilderness, reserve, preserve, or other conservation area. It does not allow government or public access to private lands. Federal agencies that undertake, fund or permit activities that may affect critical habitat are required to consult with the Service to ensure such actions do not adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat.

Areas proposed for critical habitat in this revision include portions of the Fort Morgan State Historic Site and adjacent lands, lands along the right-of-way of Fort Morgan Parkway, lands south of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's Coastal Construction Control Line, high elevation habitat in the Gulf Highlands area (also known as the multi-family area), and portions of Gulf State Park. The proposed revision includes much of the original designation and higher elevation scrub habitat that the Service now knows is important for the mouse during and after hurricane events. The Service is proposing to exclude the Perdue Unit of the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge from the critical habitat, as well as 50 areas that are covered by incidental take permits under the ESA because of existing conservation plans.

When specifying an area as critical habitat, the ESA requires the Service to consider economic and other relevant impacts of the designation. If the benefits of excluding an area outweigh the benefits of including it, the Secretary may exclude an area from critical habitat, unless this would result in the extinction of a threatened or endangered species. In 30 years of implementing the ESA, the Service has found that designation of critical habitat provides little additional protection for most listed species, while preventing the agency from using scarce conservation resources for activities with greater conservation benefits.

The cost of designating critical habitat for the Alabama beach mouse is largely associated with residential and commercial development. Those development costs, which are estimated at between \$18.1 million and \$51.2 million, represent more than 98 percent of the total expenditure. Other impacts include the cost associated with transportation, which is estimated to cost between \$0.1 million and \$0.5 million (approximately one percent of estimated costs) for efforts to reduce the impact of road construction and maintenance projects on the mouse. Administrative costs make up less than one percent of the total estimated expenditure.

In almost all cases, recovery of listed species will come through voluntary cooperative partnerships, not regulatory measures such as critical habitat. Habitat is also protected through cooperative measures under the ESA, including Habitat Conservation Plans, Safe Harbor Agreements, Candidate Conservation Agreements and state programs. In addition, voluntary partnership programs such as the Service's Private Stewardship Grants and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program also restore habitat. Habitat for listed species is provided on many of the Service's National Wildlife Refuges, and state wildlife management areas.

Public comments on the draft economic analysis or the proposed revisions to critical habitat will be accepted until September 7, 2006. Written comments and information should be mailed, faxed, or delivered in person to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Daphne Field Office, Attn: Acting Field Supervisor, 1208-B Main Street, Daphne, Alabama 36526; Fax: 251-441-6222; or sent by electronic mail to: abmcriticalhabitat@fws.gov. Comments previously submitted need not be resubmitted as they will be incorporated into the public record as part of this comment period and will be fully considered in preparation of the final rule. The Service has scheduled an information session on August 24, from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m., and a public hearing from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., on the proposed critical habitat revision. It will be held at the Gulf Shores Adult Activity Center, 260 Clubhouse Drive, in Gulf Shores, Alabama, 36542.

A complete description of the proposed revision to critical habitat has been published in the *Federal Register*. Copies of the proposal and maps are available on the Service Internet site at: <http://www.fws.gov/daphne>, or by contacting Rob Tawes, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1208-B Main Street, Daphne, Alabama 36526, telephone: 251-441-5181. For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit our home page at <http://www.fws.gov/southeast> or <http://www.fws.gov/>.

FEMA Grants \$3.8 Million to Dredge Port Fourchon

Release Date: August 18, 2006

[» More Information on Louisiana Hurricane Katrina](#)

[» More Information on Louisiana Hurricane Rita](#)

NEW ORLEANS, La. -- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced today that it will grant \$3.8 million as the federal share to dredge and clear Port Fourchon on Bayou LaFourche from silt and sediment caused by Hurricane Katrina.

"This represents a major step in rebuilding our coastal infrastructure and economy," said Jim Stark, director of FEMA's Transitional Recovery Office in Louisiana. "Boats have grounded in the waterway and the port has been clogged. But the tide is turning our way."

The storm surge and waves of Hurricane Katrina crossed more than 10 miles of salt marsh to damage the facilities. Sediments from the marsh were deposited in the channel leading to Port Fourchon, and in slips A and B and the commercial marina at the port. The grant for the Greater LaFourche Port Commission represents 90 percent of the expected \$4.2 million cost of the project.

FEMA's Public Assistance Program gives disaster recovery aid to state and local governments and to certain private nonprofit organizations to help them respond to disasters, recover from their impact, and mitigate impact from future disasters. Although the assistance is given through governments and organizations, its goal is to help a community and all its citizens recover from the devastation of disasters. FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National

Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

Energy

MMS Will Work with State to Ensure Successful Lease Sale 200

MMS 8/16/2006

URL: http://www.rigzone.com/news/article.asp?a_id=35238

On the eve of Western Gulf of Mexico Lease Sale 200, officials with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS), the agency in charge of conducting lease sales in the Outer Continental Shelf, are optimistic that they will be able to address any issues expressed by the State of Louisiana involving the sale. Lease Sale 200 is the next step in MMS's goal to ensure a stable source of domestic energy for the nation through the continued sale of leases in the Gulf. A decision by a federal judge has allowed MMS to hold the sale as scheduled.

MMS is committed to addressing the issues raised by the State of Louisiana. "MMS will continue to make a sustained effort to address the state's concerns so that a fair and comprehensive treatment of the issues raised can result," Johnnie Burton, Minerals Management Service Director said. We value our long-term constructive relationship with the State of Louisiana and we will make every effort to consult and meet with the state to work on these issues in an informed and considerate manner."

MMS is committed to fostering continued oil and gas operations in Federal waters that are conducted in an environmentally sensitive manner. MMS is eager to work with the state and to ensure all interested parties that every effort will be made to address the issues raised by the state so that the environmentally safe development of oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico can continue to meet the expanding energy needs of the American public and foster our growing economy.

Judge Seems Open to Louisiana Stance in Lease Sale Suit

by John Biers, Dow Jones Newswires 8/8/2006

URL: http://www.rigzone.com/news/article.asp?a_id=34974

NEW ORLEANS Aug 08, 2006 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) As he peppered a federal lawyer on U.S. responsiveness to Louisiana coastal concerns, U.S. District Judge Kurt Engelhardt on Tuesday signaled sympathy for the Louisiana argument that last year's treacherous storms fundamentally altered the dynamics surrounding offshore energy development in the region. "Is the general feeling that it'll just get a little worse?" Engelhardt asked the U.S. government attorney Brian McLachlan, attempting to glean the government's view of the potential coastal harm from an upcoming Gulf of Mexico lease sale.

Asserting that the sale would harm Louisiana's already-vulnerable coast, Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Blanco asked the federal court to block the sale, scheduled for Aug. 16. "We're not saying there's going to be no impact, or not a significant impact," replied McLachlan, who is representing the Minerals Management Service. "What we're saying is, the impact for this specific lease sale would be minor."

The hearing Tuesday centered on Louisiana's petition for an emergency order to block the sale, because of the state's contention that it would cause "irreparable harm" to the coast. The outcome will have little immediate impact on global energy markets because federal leasing of tracts is only the earliest stage of

development. And instead of a debate on new activity in virgin land, the sale concerns incremental additional activity in a region already lined with offshore rigs and platforms.

But a ruling by a federal judge to block the sale would send a powerful message about the changing attitude toward future energy development from a hurricane-ravaged region that has historically served as the backbone for U.S. domestic oil and gas. Louisiana has balked at the MMS environmental analysis for the August sale, which is based heavily on a 2002 U.S. development program that the agency acknowledges has not been fundamentally reevaluated since Hurricane Katrina.

A ruling could come Friday, but Engelhardt said a decision was "most likely" to be released Monday. After the hearing, Sam Kalen, a Washington attorney with Van Ness Feldman, who is representing Louisiana, predicted the losing side would appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Implications Of August Sale

In the course of nearly two hours of testimony, Engelhardt, a long-time Louisiana attorney appointed to the federal bench by President George W. Bush, at times pressed Kalen. But Engelhardt's aggressive questioning of McLachlan and of the American Petroleum Institute seemed to indicate openness to the state's argument.

Much of the hearing centered on the implications of the August sale, given that Louisiana hasn't signaled interest in removing existing platforms, or blocking new developments that are being installed. In organizing the lease sale, the MMS must probe the environmental implications of more development, because it is "the last time the U.S. can look at the cumulative impacts of this activity," Kalen argued. The MMS's failure to more seriously study the implications post-Katrina "arbitrarily and capriciously" violates federal standards, according to Louisiana. "Whatever might have happened in the past, it's a changed environment now," Kalen said. "Unfortunately, things can't be done the same way as they have in the past."

The MMS has argued that a delay in the sale will deprive the Treasury of hundreds of millions of dollars of lease payments and will delay additional energy production vital to the nation. The agency has said the sale can't cause "irreparable injury" because it is simply an occasion for the government to open bids and any operational activity such as drilling requires additional regulatory approval. In addition, McLachlan pointed to some planning modifications post-Katrina and reminded Engelhardt that the emergency order sought by Louisiana requires an "exceedingly high burden" legal standard. API, which also opposes the Louisiana motion, said a delay would cause uncertainty and undermine investment enthusiasm in the Gulf.

Unease In New Orleans

The hearing, held just weeks before the Aug. 29 anniversary of Katrina, comes amid a lingering sense of unease and uncertainty in New Orleans, not only about the region's ability to withstand another assault from Mother Nature this year, but also over a federal response to the tragedy that many locals continue to view as woefully inadequate.

Louisiana's role as an energy hub is at the center of that frustration. As congressional debate focuses on possible new drilling areas throughout the U.S., many Louisiana officials feel the state's plight has been taken for granted. The Louisiana congressional delegation is pushing legislation to direct more federal offshore royalty funds to coastal restoration, but the Bush administration and lawmakers from both parties have balked at the fiscal implications of some of the efforts.

Given the simultaneousness of the lease sale litigation and the royalty efforts in Congress, some commentators have questioned whether Louisiana would drop the case if federal funds come through. But

Blanco on Tuesday insisted the state intended to pursue the litigation regardless of what Congress does. "This case is about state's rights," said Blanco, who noted that Florida, California and other states have barred most offshore development near their coasts with little opposition from the federal government. "We have been treated as if we have no voice in our own destiny," she said. Blanco said Louisiana still supports offshore development, but that it can't shoulder more activity at this time. "We need some time," Blanco said. "Right now, we are crippled. We cannot take on any more obligations at this time."

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Grant Opportunities

Applicants Sought for \$19 million in Watershed Grants

Contact Information: (Media only) Dale Kemery (202) 564-4355 / kemery.dale@epa.gov (Other inquiries) Carol Peterson (202) 566-1304 / peterson.carol@epa.gov

(Washington, DC - August 16, 2006) EPA plans to award up to \$19 million in grants to help clean up and restore the nation's waterways. Proposals must reach EPA by October 16, 2006, for capacity-building grants and November 15, 2006, for project-implementation grants. Capacity-building grants provide for education and training, whereas implementation grants involve actions such as protection and preservation. "President Bush understands that citizen-centered programs foster innovation while accelerating restoration of watersheds through cooperative conservation and grass-roots partnerships," said Assistant Administrator for Water Benjamin H. Grumbles.

State governors and tribal leaders nominate potential recipients for implementation grants. EPA will evaluate and rank submissions based on criteria outlined in each notice. Watershed organizations receive the awards based on how likely they are to achieve environmental results in a relatively short time. Selection of the grantees will be announced in the fall.

Under the Targeted Watersheds Grant Program, EPA has awarded nearly \$40 million to 46 watershed organizations since 2003. In excess of \$2 million has gone to five watershed capacity-building organizations to further the activities of more than 3,000 local watershed groups. For this grant cycle, the focus will be on supporting community-based approaches and strengthening local capacity to protect and clean up water resources. Watersheds currently in the program cover more than 142,000 square miles of the nation's landscape draining into lakes, rivers, and streams.

Yesterday, EPA released its 2005 Targeted Watersheds Grant Annual Report. It provides examples of how grant funding helps watershed partnerships advance the goals of the Clean Water Act through sound watershed plans. Comprised of informative fact sheets and colorful maps, the report highlights 34 community efforts to reach measurable clean-water goals. The report also includes summaries of grantees focused on capacity-building efforts.

More information:

Targeted Watershed Grants: <http://www.epa.gov/twg>

Grant process: <http://www.grants.gov>

2005 Annual Report: <http://www.epa.gov/twg/2005annualreport>

Training and Conferences

Miss. River Commission Coming to La., Aug. 25

Your chance to present ideas and question the Corps of Engineers

NEW ORLEANS – What’s your interest: hurricane protection, coastal restoration, Atchafalaya Basin, wetlands regulation, inland navigation? Want to give the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers a piece of your mind? Have questions to ask?

Your opportunity will sail into Louisiana aboard the Motor Vessel Mississippi—for a public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission in Houma on Aug. 25. “The commission’s seven members are well positioned to give you frank answers on Corps issues,” said Col. Richard Wagenaar, commander of the New Orleans District. “Their degree of independence springs from nomination by the President and confirmation by the Senate. Under the law, the members advise the Corps’ chief of engineers and the secretary of the Army.”

The public meeting begins at 9 a.m. The MV Mississippi, a 241-foot Corps towboat, will be at the Cenac Towing Co. dock, 141 Bayou Dularge Road, Houma. The Louisiana public meeting will conclude the 2006 Low-Water Inspection Trip, which began Aug. 14 in La Crosse, Wis. All public meeting proceedings, including citizens’ statements and members’ responses, are stenographically recorded and available to the public.

The Mississippi River Commission includes three Corps generals responsible for the basin’s three great rivers: Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, the commission president and Mississippi Valley Division commander; Brig. Gen. Bruce A. Berwick, commander of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, and Brig. Gen. Gregg F. Martin, commander of the Northwestern Division (Missouri River).

Houma public meeting agenda

- Brig. Gen. Crear reports on national and regional issues.
- Col. Wagenaar reports on the New Orleans District
- Members of the public present their views and ask questions.

The Mississippi River Commission was established in 1879. Staff support is provided by the Mississippi Valley Division, based in Vicksburg, Miss. The division directs the work of six Corps districts on the Mississippi River from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada.

Mississippi River Commission:

<http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/MRC/index.php>

Florida Master Naturalist Freshwater Wetlands Course

Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve announces a Florida Master Naturalist Freshwater Wetlands Course. Through classroom, field trip, and practical experience, learn about:

- Florida's Natural Freshwater Wetland Systems: Marshes,
- Swamps, Rivers, Lakes, and Springs Environments
- Plants and animals that depend upon wetlands and the role of
- humans

- General wetland ecology, habitats, vegetation types, wildlife
- Naturalist interpretation skills
- Environmental ethics and conservation issues

This course consists of 40 contact hours, which includes about 20 hours of classroom presentations, instructional videos, interpretive speaking practice and completion of group projects; and about 20 hours of field trips. Students receive a Certificate of Completion, Embroidered Patch, Wetlands lapel pin, and comprehensive FMNP Freshwater Wetland Systems Student Workbook.

COURSE FEE: \$200 Registration Deadline: September 11, 2006

For more information about the course and to register go to: <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/fmnp/>.

ANERR Contacts: Rosalyn Kilcollins or Rosalyn.Kilcollins@dep.state.fl.us and Alan Knothe (850) 653-8063 or Alan.knothe@dep.state.fl.us

Symposium on Sources, Transport and Fate of Nutrients in the Mississippi and Atchafalaya River Basins

This symposium is the fourth in a series of symposiums sponsored by the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force (www.epa.gov/msbasin/actionplan.html). The symposiums are part of the reassessment of the Action Plan for Reducing, Controlling and Mitigating Hypoxia in the Northern Gulf of Mexico. Short-term action item #11 from the action plan states that “By December 2005, and every five years thereafter, the Task Force will assess the nutrient load reductions achieved and the response of the hypoxic zone, water quality throughout the Basin, and economic and social effects. Based on this assessment, the Task Force will determine appropriate actions to continue to implement this strategy, or, if necessary, revise the strategy.”

This symposium will focus on recent scientific findings about the sources, transport, and fate of nutrients in the Mississippi and Atchafalaya River Basins. Key topics will be addressed at various scales from small watersheds to large rivers, including the effects of these processes on nutrient delivery to the Gulf of Mexico.

This symposium is sponsored by: the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service; the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water.

Location: Millennium Hotel Minneapolis, 1313 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55403, <http://www.millenniumhotels.com>

Dates: November 7-9, 2006

Contact Information:

Janice R. Ward, jward@usgs.gov, 303-236-1871

Katie Flahive, Flahive.Katie@epamail.epa.gov, 202-566-1206

Home Page URL: <http://www.epa.gov/msbasin/taskforce/reassess2005.htm>

9th International Conference on Shellfish Restoration

Throughout the world there is a growing commitment to the restoration of degraded coastal ecosystems. Political pressure by shareholders in the future of the world's coastal areas has resulted in renewed interest in preserving and enhancing coastal resources at all levels of government. At the local level many volunteer organizations have developed successful programs to identify problem areas, recommend improvements and monitor progress.

The 9th International Conference on Shellfish Restoration (ICSR'06) will provide an opportunity for government officials, resource managers, users, community leaders and residents to discuss approaches to restore coastal shellfish ecosystems through management, enhancement and restoration efforts, and to learn about and discuss innovative management, ecological and social approaches to restore degraded shellfish habitat and improve coastal ecosystem health.

Location: Charleston, South Carolina, USA

Dates: November 15-19, 2006

Contact Information: Elaine Knight, Elaine.Knight@scseagrant.org, 843-727-6406

Home Page URL: <http://www.scseagrant.org/icsr.htm>

Did you find this edition useful? Please send suggestions, comments, and new items for publication to Laurie.Rounds@noaa.gov